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Caution Urged in Selecting Contractors to Repair Storm Damage

ELLICOTT CITY, MD – As warmer months approach, bringing with them the threat of dangerous storms that can cause property damage, the Howard County's Department of Citizen Services is offering advice to residents seeking contractors to make repairs.

- Do not use an unlicensed contractor! Make sure the contractor is currently licensed with the Maryland Home Improvement Commission (MHIC) by calling 410-230-6309.
- Check the complaint history of the contractor with MHIC, and the Howard County Office of Consumer Affairs at 410-313-6420. Also, ask for references of recently completed jobs and check them.
- Beware of any contractors who come to your home unsolicited. Any contractor going door to door must have a current Howard County peddler's license. For more on what those licenses look like and what they mean, visit <http://www.howardcountymd.gov/displayprimary.aspx?id=4294967640>
- Always get more than one estimate before contracting for repairs or service. Don't be pressured into signing any contract offered as a "One Day Only Special."
- Don't sign any contract without reading all the fine print. Be sure that any contract you sign includes a clause that provides you with a three day right to cancel clause, as required by law.
- Do not pay more than 1/3 of the contract price as a down payment at the time the contract is signed, as required by law. While negotiable, do not pay the remaining balance on the job until it is properly complete.

For more information and tip sheets, visit

<http://www.howardcountymd.gov/departments.aspx?ID=4294967625>

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